

0118. Coolie Sangha Formalisation Application to EZE (Dec 1989)

3 Year Project Application submitted to EZE, Germany, which describes the situation in which the project exists, lists 4 arguments for the need of the new project, and elaborates the project means

1. PROJECT TITLE

GULUR EXPANSION PROGRAMME II PHASE
(Coolie Sangha Formalisation)

2. LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

- To build up the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha as an authentic and independent mass organisation of the Coolies, so that agricultural labourers struggling for their humanisation can holistically identify themselves with it.
- To pursue a policy of decentralisation in order to encourage and ensure the development of a positive pluralism through village level autonomy and diversity so that the Coolies may find a recognition of their individual and personal contribution in the shaping of the structure, discipline, content and direction of their organisation.
- To support the Coolies without any inhibitions, through all the every form of material as well as non-material assistance, to give effective expression to their own knowledge base through an articulation of their wisdom, and which they normally exhibit only through the survival strategies they have developed in order to eke out an existence in an environment which is hostile to even accepting their very intelligence.
- To follow a two-organisation policy which is totally transparent not just in day to day functioning but also in the formulation, stating and perusal of plans and intentions, and which alone will enable the achievement of these above stated objectives.
- To achieved a real and tangible increase in the Coolie families' income level and standard of living as a final measure of the effectivity of the Coolie Sangha Model of development, and to wholly involve the Coolies in the periodic measuring of these achievements so that we may be impartial and critical in making an hones impact appraisal.

3. SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES

3.1. Integrate Member Coolies into the BCS

To immediately integrate the Coolie Members, CSU Representatives and Cluster Secretaries of the GEP Area as full fledged and accredited members of the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha with full voting rights.

3.2. Encourage development of Autonomy & Positive Pluralism

To introduce, through intensified cadre training, meetings, debates and enhanced adult literacy, a richer diversity in village level Coolie Sangha Units with the total and grass-root participation of all the member coolies in this managing and furthering process.

3.3. Budget Decentralisation

To forgo the prerogative to make discretionary sanctions in the fields of referral health, legal aid and aid distress that ADATS held in the first 3 year Coolie Sangha Formation Phase, and to decentralise these budgets and decisions to the Cluster Meets where the Coolies themselves expend on those items.

3.4. Mahila Meetings

To continue to enforce a positive discrimination in favour of women, and to set up weekly Mahila Meetings for Coolie women to separately discuss matters.

It shall, however, remain an important objective of ADATS to integrate these separate meetings of women and men into common Coolie Sangha meetings which are authentically free of gender bias within this 3 year Formalisation phase.

3.5. Gap Filling

To extend the village coverage of individual Clusters through a concerted effort at gap filling in order to increase geopolitical coverage by encouraging the Coolies to themselves reach out to the odd villages of the GEP Area that have been left uncovered in the first three-year Coolie Sangha Formation phase.

3.6. Effective Coverage of Village Populations

To develop the Coolies as an effective minority through the continued promoting of the larger unification of an enlarged poor extending across the caste and community lines, and the realising of an alliance based on solidarity between Coolies as a whole and middle peasant Women.

ADATS will ensure, at the same time, that the leadership for the resultant actions and struggles that ensue always stays within the Coolie Sangha and not assume a *Ryot* class bias through this getting together across the class lines.

3.7. Entry into Local Bodies

To sociopolitically enable the organised Coolies to actualise on their numbers and enter into local civic bodies in an attempt to positively influence village society through the redefinition of concepts of power and leadership. We believe that the Coolies are capable of making this larger contribution through the projection of a very special ideology that is particularly characteristic of the Coolie class.

3.8. Sangha Funds

To intensify the campaign whereby Coolies save for the posterity of their mass organisation by contributing 10% of their earnings, from whatever source, to their respective Sangha Funds with a clear self financing objective.

3.9. Manage their Coolie Credit Funds

To upgrade ADATS' accomplishment techniques and continue imbibing state of the art management skills so that the Coolies are enabled to themselves operate their economically relevant and politically subservient alternate credit structure by the end of this three-year phase.

To achieve a real and tangible increase in the Coolie families' income levels and standard of living through a more technically supported use of the CCF project in order to impart appropriate technologies in each and every field of Coolie production.

4. SITUATION IN WHICH THE PROJECT EXISTS

4.1. Gulur Hobli covers a hilly region of Bagepalli taluk which is historically noted for its *Ryot* agitation under the aegis of Left forces. This has resulted in the middle peasantry being comparatively united and not fragmented into feuding factions.

Unfortunately the original agenda of their unity, which was to confront the bourgeois State, has long been abandoned. It has, instead, slithered over the years into a cunning used to cheat, oppress and exploit the Coolies in far more a brutal manner than did the Landlords of yore.

Ryots, apart from finding in their a vent for expressing their frustrations which were dangerously coupled with a reactionary organisational capacity, also found it very profitable to bully and maintain a gangster like grip on each and every facet of the Hobli's life, the chief among them being the plight of the Coolies. This is what has kept their dying class and obsolete economics afloat till the advent of the Coolie Sangha.

4.2. The Gulur Extension Programme (GEP), where ADATS started building Coolie Sangha Units, (CSUs) in September 1986, in partnership with EZE, is now 3½ years old. Politically strong CSUs have been built in 54 villages comprising 10 Clusters.

These 54 CSUs have a membership strength of 1,682 coolie families which represents 35.7% of the total population. Each village has an ADATS paid full time Village Level Worker and a woman Village Health Worker to build the Coolie Sanghas and implement the various programmes, projects and activities.

4.3. Though ADATS tried to implement an Adult Literacy Programme in the first years of our involvement, this was not taken very seriously by the Coolies.

One reason has been, quite honestly, because adult Coolies never consider literacy as a very important prerequisite for developing organisational strength. The conducting of ALP classes has always had, in our experience, an element of our insistence and imposition in it. But the other reason has to do with the hostile area specificity of the Hobli. The Coolies' priorities and concerns during those initial months, when ADATS would normally have concentrated night classes, were totally different.

In any case, the well designed cadre training syllabus which was incorporated into the content and syllabus of the ALP was not fully used to raise the consciousness of the Coolies in any structured or disciplined manner. Bitter struggle has instead, without any exaggeration, been the greatest teacher for the Coolies of Gulur Hobli.

Animated discussions during the innumerable struggles that they have gone through these past 3½ years in order to simply assert their right to form the Coolie Sangha Units has resulted in a deep and fundamental politicisation of a spontaneous and indigenous nature. This has its limitations as well as a terrific potential.

4.4. Social and economic issues relating to land, wage and caste discrimination, and issues of corruption and cheating were taken up in many villages of the GEP area. But they never got a high priority, even in the minds of the effected persons. This was due to the all prevailing presence of the other more fundamental organisational issue that forever loomed large in front of the Gulur Coolies throughout these past 3½ years.

These personal issues, though tackled with a real seriousness, at great cost in terms of suffering and hardship, and with a surprisingly high degree of actual success were, in this sense, heavily politicised in a base and mundane manner by the Coolies themselves.

4.5. A massive 3 year Dry Land Development Project (DLDP) has been introduced in the GEP area from March 1988 to give meaningful employment to 1 person from each member coolie family for 5 summer months every year. This programme aims to develop about 6,000 acres of virgin and under-utilised, highly eroded dry land hugging the hills and belonging to the member coolies.

The Coolie Sangha Units are being strengthened by this DLDP because the project is subservient to clearly spelt out non-economic objectives which are built into it. It has put a stop to seasonal migration and has give a chance for regular and day to day Coolie Sangha building activities to continue. The unjust and low wage structure in the GEP area has been positively effected with the average daily wage already rising from Rs 3 to Rs 11.

But here again it can be seen that while impressive technical achievements have been obtained more as responses to bitter challenges from the *Ryots* rather than as sustained actions to attain a consolidation of newly attained gains in societal position and strength.

4.6. An alternate, interest-free credit giving programme which was developed by the coolies in the older villages was introduced in the GEP area with a high degree of success.

As on September 1989, a total of 619 coolie borrowers took loans averaging at Rs.806 to overcome various problems. Rearing cattle was the most popular reason for Coolies availing CCF loans with 55.1% of loans taken for this purpose. Crop loans and working capital for petty trade followed as close second and third respectively.

Coolies also borrow for consumption, buying implements, redeeming lost lands, repairing bullock carts and rethatching their huts. Only 2 Coolies had borrowed, as on October 1989, for buying feed and fodder to maintain cattle that they already owned.

This utilisation pattern indicates that the Coolies of Gulur are keen to use any and every opportunity offered to them in order to set up alternate sources of earning and escape from the clutches of the *Ryots*.

5. ARGUMENTATION FOR THE NEED OF THIS 2ND AND 3 YEAR COOLIE SANGHA FORMALISATION PHASE

5.1. Today's situation in Gulur reveals a picture of 11,000 women, men and children belonging to 1,682 Coolie families having formed themselves into 54 politically strong village level Coolie Sangha Units. Their determination to form themselves into Sanghas and assert their fundamental right to form associations is very apparent. But it cannot at the same time be claimed that a comparable level of formality, structure and discipline have been established in the Gulur area as in the other areas where ADATS worked for the same length of time.

This shortfall is, understandably, due to the overall hostile situation in the Hobli and the extremely difficult conditions under which the Coolies of Gulur have finally asserted their right to form village level CSUs. But the why's and whereof's become unimportant when an exploited and oppressed people fall short of anything but the total achievement of emancipation in their endeavour to liberate themselves. They place themselves in a very vulnerable position and should they fail, must be prepared to face a situation far worse than the conditions they were rebelling against.

The experience at Gulur shows that the manifestation of the Coolie Sangha building process varies according to the socio-political and historical area specificity of the region where the rural poor use it for their emancipation. We therefore believe that the time frame for the implementation of the strategy to build Coolie Sanghas (as elaborated in the enclosed paper on Coolie Sangha Formalisation) has to be adapted without compromising on its underlying theory and alternate political philosophy.

This is the first reason which compels us to continue in Gulur Hobli with the same intensity, but with a careful sensitivity to the pride they have in their achievements, for quite some more years.

5.2. At the same time, we must bear in mind that defiance alone is not the stuff that sustainable mass organisations are built on. Definite and formal systems, structures, and the rig-

orous discipline that demands a grinding regularity has proved, in the areas where ADATS is working, to contribute to a guarantee of sustainability and continuity.

These include membership lists, suspension and cancellation procedures, periodic review meets, grass-root planning practices, annual elections of CSU Representatives from each village level Unit, procedures to recall their elected functionaries even before the expiry of terms, etc.

These are routine and mundane activities that may lack a lot of the excitement and thrill that is inherent in hot words and pitched battles, but are absolutely vital if the efforts of the Coolies of Gulur have to achieve something more lasting than the temporary. We are not suggesting that all this is totally absent in the GEP. It exists, but on our insistence, at our behest and due to an expenditure of our effort and caution. What we are saying is that the realisation has to be responsibly internalised by the Coolies of Gulur is their heroic struggle and sacrifice has to become anything more than a passing phenomenon.

5.3. The organisational agenda for the Coolies of Gulur and their CSUs is not comparable to the concerns and priorities that can be observed in the other parts of Bagepalli taluk where ADATS has been working for a longer time. In Gulur, a largess is lacking and the Coolies appear to be imitating the *Ryots* in their strategy of matching a fight for fight. The Coolies Sanghas are somehow not seen as instruments at the service of the whole of village society. This will weaken their struggle since it is the expanding ideology of the Coolies and their inclusive agenda that have made coolie struggles earn the respect of the neutral population and enabled them to survive in spite of extreme local hostility in other parts of Bagepalli taluk.

In this sense, the consequence of ADATS' 3½ year involvement thus far hovers on the tragic and can best be described by simply stating that the Coolies of Gulur have become very strong, even if not conceptually clearer. All that ADATS seems to have achieved in this first phase seems to be the boast of a physical presence in the Hobli though this is not, in itself, any mean boast.

In the forthcoming 3 year phase, ADATS has the very serious task of politicising the Coolies of Gulur and enabling them to discover and articulate their own vision of a just society and evolve appropriate means to realise this without an aping of the oppressor and his tactics.

5.4. ADATS and EZE have been equal and participating partners in the effort at Gulur, and share a moral responsibility for its outcome, in spite of each having its own functional specialisation. Any let or abandoning of this partnership involvement at this crucial juncture would constitute a betrayal of a real and viable possibility for the Coolies of Gulur to make a final breakthrough.

6. PROJECT MEANS

(an elaboration of the actual steps contemplated in order to achieve the short term objectives)

6.1. Integrate into the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha

In January 1990, all the members Coolies and Representatives from the 54 village level CSUs in the Gulur area will be formally introduced as full fledged and accredited members of the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha with full voting rights.

This will enable them, for example, to put up their own candidate from Gulur Hobli for the post of BCS Secretary. They can also obtain a greater degree of autonomy and independence from ADATS staff ridding themselves of the continuous nag and adhocism that is inevitable when trapped in the mercy of social workers, however well meaning and politically clear they may be! They will have greater independence in matters pertaining to the operation of their

CSU bank accounts, the possibility to overrule ADATS' advice on the usage of their Coolie Credit Funds provided the monthly BCS Meeting approves, etc.

But most importantly, integration into the BCS will give the 1,682 coolie families from Gulur a greater sense of identification with the remaining 4,000 member coolies in and around Bagepalli taluk and help get rid of that feeling of isolation which so easily permits them to slip back into an apathetic cynicism.

We are convinced that the ensuing contact between the Coolies of Gulur and the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha will be a two-way affair which will not just benefit the new comers. Besides bringing them under the structured discipline of the taluk level apex organisation it will, at the same time, enable the newly joined Coolies to contribute to the making and furthering of the representation and discipline of the BCS by adding the peculiar and particular flavour of their area specificity to the mass organisation. It has been our experience that each time a new group of villages joined the BCS, it somehow grew into a body that took onto its agenda increased areas, greater responsibilities and additional facets of the Coolies' lives.

6.2. Encourage the development of Autonomy and a Positive Pluralism

We are acutely aware of the tendency for huge structures which are so awesomely disciplined and efficient like the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha, even if they be authentic and independent people's organisations, to slip away from the rational of centralised democracy and slither into the negative logic of centralism per se, demanding that their Members conform to a standard uniformity.

The sheer success of the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha demands the encouraging of a greater autonomy to its village level Units and the fostering of a positive pluralism. This has to be correctly understood as the inevitable and therefore healthy development due to, rather than in spite of, the achievements made by the mass organisation as a viable and effective apex co-ordination body.

On the other hand, the BCS can easily fall prey to the evil design of anyone who is shrewd enough to hijack the sheer numbers and the subtle but all prevailing influence that it has over so many people, their individual as well as collective thinking, and over their concerted actions. On the other hand, even with the best of intentions, it is possible that considerations like manageability introduce a centralism that the members find very difficult to escape out of.

In either case, the concept of leadership will get reinforced. It was in order to reject this concept of leadership and all that it stood for that the coolies built the BCS in the first place. And the success they have had in building it up so well is once again to be found in this very rejection. Not guarding the mass organisation from a possible reintroduction of the powerful logic of leadership through the slipping into a centralised structure will result in individual Coolies getting reduced to a faceless mass, a mere abstraction in a common denominator.

It therefore becomes imperative to ensure that a process is set in where there is an uninhibited participation of each and every family member, specially the women. Autonomy will be meaningless without this kind of a wholesome participation where each and everyone contributes. Only then will a positive pluralism and healthy diversity develop in each and every village level CSU.

The oft repeated argument warning against autonomy is that it will be hijacked by self styled local leaders and converted into license for liberalism. There is some measure of truth in this apprehension. But if certain trends or developments in some or the other autonomous Unit has to be prevented from slipping into a license for liberalism, this can be done through a re-

sponsible political intervention of argument, debate and convincing, rather than through any central dictum or threat.

Here is an illustration of one of the deeper and higher roles that can be played by us, the bourgeois intelligentsia who have chosen to accompany the Coolies. ADATS recognises that any other form of restricted or representative participation through leaders who claim to speak on behalf of their constituencies, will only lead to harmful consequences. We therefore, accept the role of seeing the decentralisation policy through in a very serious and responsible manner in this 3 year Formalisation phase.

6.3. Budget Decentralisation

In our entire area of operation, in Bagepalli Taluk and elsewhere, ADATS has decided to forgo the prerogative to make discretionary sanctions in the fields of referral health, legal aid and aid distress. In the GEP area, it was we who held and managed these budgets in the first 3 year Coolie Sangha Formation phase. These budgets and decision making powers will now be decentralised to the 10 Cluster Meets where the Coolies will themselves decide upon and expend on these items.

The normative and emotional reason for this decision is, simply stated, because these are the only areas of our relationship with the Coolies where we are forced to exhibit a kind of a God like superiority and assume onto ourselves the powers to decide who should live and who should not.

We have never felt very comfortable about this and it has caused some very personally embarrassing moments when, for example, we had to decide whether a Coolie needing surgery has to be attended to at great cost or if the same money should be used to continue with our community health education activities in that Cluster for some more months. We looked at this role as a responsibility thrust upon us, and justified our acceptance with the lame excuse that the Coolies' unity and organisation was not yet mature enough to handle discretionary budgets with limited moneys.

A few months back, ADATS took a hard look at itself and decided to put an abrupt stop to these pretences at a false superiority which we had assumed onto ourselves. We decided that the maximum "risk" we would run is that of the Coolies making a few wrong prioritisations and foolish decisions or, at the very most, some amount of misappropriation by their elected representatives or functionaries. These, we felt, were hazards that everyone could quite easily live with.

The handing over of responsibilities, we realised, was the only effective way to introduce and enhance management capabilities in the Coolies and their Sanghas. We will illustrate this through the example of referral health and medical aid:

Ever since ADATS incorporated in its budget a discretionary allocation for extending medical aid to the Coolies, sickness has never been a threat for them. Earlier, the very thought of falling ill and having to go to the local *Ryots* for an urgently required hand loan was enough to deter the Coolies from even joining their village level CSUs, let alone taking up issues that they felt were vital.

For the past 10 years, we can state with absolute certainty that this fear has been totally wiped out from the Coolies' minds due to the very efficient arrangements we have made for filling out prescriptions for medicines not available with the government hospitals, referring sick people to major church and government hospitals and meeting their travel costs, the training of VHWs and supplying them with basic medicines every month etc.

Our not continuing to provide succour with this discretionary activity would result in a major setback for the Coolies by eroding their possibility to build up the Coolie Sanghas. But the

presumption here is that the Coolies would not be able to do the same for themselves even if they had the financial resources and wherewithal. It is this presumption that the budget decentralisation decision wishes to challenge.

Budget decentralisation should not be interpreted as a damning of the poor to services that are less than wholesome or efficient. The ultimate measure of effectivity should be that the same feeling of security and fearlessness that the ADATS run health services instilled in the Coolies should continue even after they themselves take up the running of these activities. We strongly suspect that after an initial spell of floundering, the Coolies will be able to provide this security to themselves far better than we did, provided we take a positive attitude and support their attempt with encouragement and technical assistance.

Autonomy means the giving of local independence to the constituent Units of the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha. In our example of health, it is possible that some Clusters decide to refer patients only to government hospitals, others to government and church, some Clusters pay only for the patients' expenses while others support the patient and an attendant, some pay travel costs for the sick to go to Bagepalli, others do not, etc. In these variations and through the sharing of their different prioritisations and procedures in the monthly 2 day BCS meetings, it is possible that the Coolies together evolve a health coverage system that is quite different from the one that ADATS now claims is honed to maximum efficiency and low cost. In this way, autonomy will lead on to positive pluralism and better results.

And finally, budget decentralisation will promote a better inter CSU relationship by making the Cluster Meets the forum to take these decisions and expend the moneys. In the initial stages there is bound to be a lot of dissatisfaction and frictions among the constituent CSUs of a cluster. It is precisely these frictions, misunderstandings and mutual accusations which will lead to a healthy relationship based on mutuality because no CSU would, in the end, wish to walk out of the forum where the money is without leaving some doors open to come back.

6.4. Mahila Meetings

ADATS took a conscious decision, at a time which coincided with the start of the Guler Expansion Programme, that though the concerns of women were not just a "separate problem" that needed "special attention", it was necessary to focus attention on the fact that the general clubbing of women into the movement could easily degenerate into a liberal paying of lip sympathy, superficially claiming that the Coolie Sangha was gender-bias free. The position and problems of coolie women, we believe, needs to be repeatedly and emphatically, re-focused over and over again, till the gender-bias free characteristic of the Coolie Sangha naturally and openly projects itself in each and every field of even the coolies' personal and private lives.

Though the Adult Literacy classes have been conducted, for example, for both women and men, we believe that it is necessary to re-conduct them once again for women alone. Though we can theoretically claim that women and men have equal right to represent their families as Coolie Members, it is necessary to ourselves identify coolie families where women take more than an average burden of management and specially invite them to be members in the place of their husbands. Similarly, we believe that the reservation made for women of 1 seat from each village level Coolie Sangha in the election for CSU Representatives has to continue till more than 1 woman per CSU start getting elected.

DLDP wages will continue to be paid to coolie women instead of to men. The Giriraja chicken programme will have only women beneficiaries. Only ladies bicycles will be bought by ADATS. Women will be appointed at senior positions even if this creates more "practical

problems” and “compromises on efficiency”. And in our writings, ADATS will continue to use she to also mean he.

6.5. Gap filling

In the first 3½ years of our involvement, quite a few villages were left untouched by Coolie Sangha building operations. As a result, a lot of gaps are left in our coverage. This has had serious negative consequences during wage strike, etc. There easily are 10 or more such villages with a substantial coolie population to be taken up in the coming 3 year phase.

It will be the collective responsibility of the respective Cluster Meets (a total of 31 local coolies, for example comprising the Cluster Secretary, 18 CSU Representatives, 6 VLWs and 6 VHWs) to go into the villages and convince the Coolies there to form Coolie Sanghas.

ADATS’ responses will be confined to paying the salaries of the new village level staff who will be selected by and answerable to the Cluster Meets, providing facilities, and the including of these newly joined Coolie Members in our list of beneficiaries.

Coolies will get a chance to re-affirm their faith in the Coolie Sangha through the advocacy of the model as something positive and desirable to their neighbours. This will prove to be very necessary to fight a complacency which is bound to set in once external forces of repression and subjugation have been tamed.

We foresee that this will once again contribute to a positive pluralism in the Coolie Sangha Formalisation phase since there will be an uneven level of organisational maturity and development in the GEP area. This, we believe, is not only inevitable but also healthy.

6.6. Effective Coverage of Village Populations and Entry into Local Bodies

This concept has been elaborately explained in ADATS’ draft paper entitled “Furthering the Coolie Sangha Model of development”. It presupposes that though the rural poor are demographically an absolute majority in the village populations, our experience in even the older villages with strong Coolie Sanghas shows that not more than 40% of the coolies organise themselves into a mass organisation with serious consequence and clout. Therefore the mere extending of the model to neighbouring villages and taluks will not result in the coolies becoming a majority that wields determining power.

Yet, by their sheer numbers, a disciplined group of organised people can positively influence the prevailing practice as well as course of societal development. To arrive at a quantum definition of a geopolitically viable area coverage, it is necessary to keep on extending till this definition is obtained. In other words, the coolies will become an effective minority in village society the moment they are capable of and thereby actually do re-shape the normative base of village society through a projection of their own values which are peculiar and particular to their class characteristic. These coolie values, we believe, are based on a recognition of the need to preserve justice and morality, even when the rest of society interprets such a pursuit as unrealistic and naïve.

It is not ADATS alone, even if with our northern partners, who have a role in this effecting of a geopolitical coverage. We believe that the organised coolies, without leaving their respective villages, can all put one foot forward. This will result in a great stride that will take us towards a larger area coverage. Coolies in the GEP area can do this by giving effective expression to what the Coolie Sangha really means. That it is not just a self-centered strategy for coolie development alone, but an empowering of the coolie class in order to re-define concepts of power, leadership, attitudes towards women, minorities, contemporary political practices, etc.

To do this, and also in so doing, they will strike alliances with other suffering, and exploited sections in the villages, including *Ryot* women. Their strategy will involve the identification of more general issues demanding a larger struggle, the entering and influencing of local level civic bodies including the Mandal Panchayats, the Primary Land Development Band, Co-operative Societies, etc.

6.7. Sangha Funds and the BCS's Posterity

The rather lofty call given by ADATS asking the coolies to contribute 10% of their earnings, from whatever source, to the respective units of their Coolie Sangha was, besides being a very serious solution offered for their organisational posterity, also symbolic in nature. It was based on the principle of the indivisibility between the concepts of participation, self-confidence and sustainability on the one side, with self-financing on the other.

We had also ensured that coolie contributions made to a particular Unit or Cluster would not, under any circumstances, be transferred or used by any other Unit or Cluster or even by the central BCS. This was done with a view to contribute to the development of genuine autonomy in the Bagepalli Coolie Sangha.

At a more tangible level, we have placed a target of Rs.10,000,000 before the Coolies. This was the magic figure which would, beyond all doubt, guarantee the continuity of the Coolies' struggle. Half of this, we went on to say, ADATS would transfer in the form of fixed assets like Community Halls and other building in the villages, another Rs.2,000,000 has been build up in the form of an organic farm which will begin to yield profits in another 5-6 years. And the balance of Rs.3,000,000 had to be generated by the Coolies themselves through cash collections from out of their daily wage earnings.

As on 31st December 1989, the taluk's Coolies have collected a total of Rs.1,045,805 which is just over one-third the projected target:

- Rs.449,803 from the older 27 villages where we have worked for the 12 years, but the call to contribute to their Sangha Funds is only 4 years old,
- Rs.394,712 from the 53 villages of the CEP area where we have worked for the past 4½ years, and the call is 4 years old, and
- Rs.201,290 from the 54 villages of the GEP area where we have worked for the past 3½ years, and call is 3 years old.

But the situation today in Gulur is that Member Coolies, by and large, contribute only a tenth of the income which they receive from ADATS as direct benefits. There is a general reluctance to similarly contribute from their other sources of private income. Every year, after the harvest, they make a voluntary contribution that has no proportionate bearing to their yields. And from the higher daily wages that they earn from the peasants as a result of ADATS inspired Coolie struggle there is hardly any Sangha Fund contributions being generated.

This situation has to be radically changed these coming 3 years through education and persuasion. Sangha Fund contributions that we presently compute at representing only a little over 3% of the total Coolie earnings have to rise towards the target of 10%. Besides instilling in them the habit to contribute properly to their Sangha Funds, ADATS will also instil in them the practice of discussing and deciding on the investment of these moneys in socially responsible endowments.

6.8 Manage their Coolie Credit Funds

This project, not to be confused with the earlier described Sangha Funds, is a fund built up with grants from ADATS in order to provide the coolies with interest-free credit for their

petty productive and consumption purposes. Enclosed please find annexures that give details on the build up and performance of this Coolie Credit Fund (CCF) project in the GEP area.

We believe that these CCFs, which have been structurally built up with a very high degree of participation and sufficient checks and controls, are sound enough to enable the Coolies to handle an even larger volume of capital. The Coolies to hand an even larger volume of capital. The Coolies of Gulur will need far more resources if they are to ensure that there is an economic development on par with and compatible to the great strides they are making in socio-political terms.

We therefore, envisage, in this 3 year phase, to increase the CCF targets by another Rs.1,000 per Member Coolie. But in order to achieve a real and tangible increase in their income levels and standard of living, it is necessary to give increased technical support to use their CCFs more productively. ADATS will therefore, in this 3 year phase, source relevant expertise in various fields connected to Coolie production and link their knowledge and valuable advice to the CCFs.

ADATS will also further upgrade its accompaniment techniques with state of the art management skills, including the special software development for an OnLine computerisation of the CCFs. Our fairly extensive experience with the OnLine, multi-user and multiple tasking computerisation of various other aspects of Coolie Sangha building operations has shown us that semi-literate Coolies are quite capable of handling a sophisticated Management Information System in order to obtain objective information, apply their own subjectivity to these demographic and other statistics, and come up with very mature political decisions and make good policies, provided the philosophy behind the computerisation programme rests on healthy practices like total and exceptionless transparency in each and every sphere of the Voluntary Agency's operations, and a conscious design and decision to prevent exclusivity.

6.9 Staff Withdrawal

ADATS has decided to extend the terms of the 10 Community workers in the Gulur Expansion Programme area by another 2 years in order to complete some of the political processes which could be accomplished in the first phase of Coolie Sangha Formation. By December 1991, however, all these Coolie youth from the other parts of the taluk, who have earlier worked as Teachers and VLWs in their native villages when Coolie Sanghas were being built up, will be withdrawn from the GEP area.

But elections for the post of Cluster Secretaries will immediately be held in all these villages and the role of the Community Workers will be limited to accompaniment and political motivation alone. More than ensuring that formalities and procedures are adhered to, for example, the Community Workers will concentrate on explaining to the Coolies why such an organisational discipline is so vital. This role has been explained in great detail in the enclosed paper on Coolie Sangha Formalisation.

By the end of this 3 year phase of the Coolie Sangha Formalisation in the GEP area, all the 60 Village Level Workers will also be withdrawn. At that time, the elected CSU Representatives and Cluster Secretaries will themselves handle the final 3 year phase of Coolie Sangha Consolidation.

7. PROJECT BUDGET

1.	Field and Village Staff	16,08,000
2.	Training and Support	14,55,000
3.	Coolie Credit Funds	16,82,000
4.	Equipment	90,000
5.	Vehicle Maintenance	2,70,000
6.	Administrative Expenses	<u>10,94,000</u>
	Grant requested from EZE	61,99,000